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BOOK REVIEWS

Individual Training in Our Colleges. By CLARENCE F. BIRDSEYE. New York: Macmillan, 1907. Pp. xxvi+434.

This book is at once a history of American colleges, a criticism of their present condition, and a suggestion for their reformation. It is written not from the standpoint of the self-educated man who has no faith in college education, but from that of a college graduate who desires to see this a source of efficiency. The historical chapters are designed to show that the early college was a training school with definite aims. It sought to prepare men for the learned professions; it did this by means of a narrow but disciplinary curriculum, by methods of instruction which were thorough and definite, and by a personal oversight which kept the student under the direct influence of the faculty.

This historical background is used as a contrast with the existing college and university system. The influence of the German university, economic and social changes since the Civil War, the growth of population, especially by immigration, are among the factors which have modified radically the earlier educational situation. The author asserts that in many ways the new high school has taken the place of the old college and that the college student of today finds himself in an anomalous position. He is neither an academy pupil nor an old-time college student under the personal care of his teachers nor is he mature enough for the free, untrammelled life of the German university type. In connection with the growth of this new situation, Mr. Birdseye points out the effects of the increase of wealth and of the demoralizing absorption in competitive intercollegiate athletics. Social distinctions, ostentation, luxury, lack of respect for scholarship, low standards of sportsmanship, have been the inevitable consequences.

Problem solving is to Mr. Birdseye the test of education. If the educational process is successful it should turn out problem solvers, i.e., men able to analyze situations and to meet them with promptness, precision, and efficiency. This the old type of college was able to do for a relatively simple society. But with the increased complexities of modern life college education seems unable to cope. There is a chaos in educational theory and practice. The idea of culture is declared to be not only vague but often actually emasculating. The elective system leads to desultory and illogical curricula, filled with "introductory" and "soft" courses. The majority of college students have no conception of genuine mental effort. College faculties are no longer able to exercise personal supervision. The demands of scholarship and other duties more and more absorb the time of college teachers. Mr. Birdseye seeks to be fair in his distribution of blame but he presses the business analogy too insistently and too far. He reiterates the charge that judged by business or factory standards, the college is a failure. Only because there is no definite way of testing results is the situation tolerated. The professional and technical school can be tested and

hence is compelled to maintain a high standard of exaction, and to give individual training. The college on the other hand is subject to no such tests. It behooves trustees and faculties to bestir themselves, to make their aims more definite, to revise their curricula, to secure good teachers, to study individual needs, and to do for today what the old-fashioned colleges did for their times.

After picturing the demoralized condition of higher education, the author describes the rise and present status of the fraternity system, and reaches the conclusion that the fraternity offers the only available substitute for the oversight which was once provided by the small college. He urges therefore with a good deal of detail the claims of the "fraternity family" for careful consideration as an aid to individual training. He shows the way in which his own fraternity has devised a system of national supervision and has in many instances achieved gratifying results. The book concludes with a chapter of direct, wholesome, and stimulating advice to college trustees and faculties, to parents, and to the alumni of fraternities on whom rests the responsibility for maintaining a sound fraternity life.

The book deals with a variety of problems. It is written with much knowledge, with keen insight, and with sincere conviction. Even though college administrators and teachers may question many statements of fact or inference, they cannot fail to respect the author of the book nor to be deeply impressed by the truths which he presses home vividly, vigorously, and insistently.

GEORGE E. VINCENT

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Economics for High Schools and Academies. By FRANK W. BLACKMAR, PH.D. New York: Macmillan, 1907. \$1.20 net.

This little volume which aims, as its title indicates, to bring the study of economic life within the mental range of high-school boys and girls should be examined with a consideration for the difficulty of the task which the author of such a book undertakes. Any intelligent study of economic laws must rest upon a considerable amount of personal observation and some general knowledge of industrial development. The time allowed to political economy where it is given any place at all in the curriculums of our secondary schools is not more than twenty and often only ten weeks. A textbook which is planned to meet these conditions, which tries to give a general account of industrial development, to discuss the fundamental laws of economics and to apply these laws to existing conditions within the compass of about four hundred short pages must, of necessity, be abstruse or superficial in spots.

Book I gives a brief but interesting outline of industrial evolution. Under the heading, "Private Economics," the four parts of Book II deal respectively with the laws of consumption, production, distribution, and exchange, while Book III, under "Public Economics," takes up the questions of government restriction and control and taxation and revenue.

The style of the author is dogmatic rather than suggestive. It is unfortunate that he felt obliged to settle within so small a compass so many important questions that have been perplexing the minds of economists, business men, and statesmen for a great many years. The following extracts will serve as an